

Communist Kerala Is Expelling Peace Corps

By Warren Unna

Washington Post Foreign Service

TRIVANDRUM, India—India's Red-run state of Kerala has decided to throw out its American Peace Corps poultry development volunteers, the pride of the Peace Corps contingents in this subcontinent, and possibly the Corps' rural public health volunteers as well.

The move was confirmed in Parliament in New Delhi recently by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Morarji Desai.

"I'm the man who said 'No,'" M. N. Govindan Nair, Kerala's Moscow-oriented Communist Minister of Agriculture said in an interview here on the question of allowing the volunteers to continue their work. "It is really humiliating to us to have people here from far-off countries to tell us about the chicken and the egg. But if you are prepared to give us some of your atomic scientists, I'm prepared to accept them." Nair said the remaining 15 Peace Corps poultry development volunteers, scheduled to remain until next July, should leave by August.

Twelve left last month at the completion of their normal tour. If Nair has his way, the ouster will also apply to the Peace Corps' two other contin-

gents in Kerala: the 22 rural public health volunteers doing work in family planning who were scheduled to be replaced by new a new group in August, and the 20 small industries volunteers who have been here a year and have another year to go.

When pressed further about his antipathy to the Peace Corps, Kerala's Minister of Agriculture lost no time in coming up with those three initials, "CIA."

"Whether they actually are CIA or not is for the central government and the security people to decide," Nair declared. "But we have it direct from the horse's mouth, your magazines, that CIA is in most of the American help."

While Nair is a Communist and at one end of Kerala's United Front Coalition government, Minister of Education C.H. Mohammed Koya, leader of the ultra-conservative Muslim League, acknowledged that he too has his suspicions about CIA subversion.

"We think there is no necessity for these people in agriculture. I think they are not worth the trouble," Koya said in an interview. And he is a man who looks back fondly on his visits to America.

Actually, another of Kera-

la's Communist leaders, a man who concentrates on trade unions now and stays out of government, said the decision on the Peace Corps was "purely political. Throwing them out provides a good popular cause."

Gary Brenneman, one of the poultry development volunteers scheduled to return to his Oakland, Calif., home thinks Kerala's top officials simply don't understand what the peace Corps work is all about.

According to Brenneman, the Indians he has been working with would be able to continue the program on their own after another year's help.

"If we leave now it will end in collapse," he predicted.

Pakistan last month let go the final 13 Peace Corps volunteers it had in a once-extensive program. The Pakistan government says it needs people of "higher skills."

Until recently, Kerala had some 74 of the 1271 Peace Corps volunteers in India—America's largest contingent.

While Indian Peace Corps programs are matters for individual states to request and supervise, the Central Ministry of Finance in India's capital of New Delhi has overall coordination authority.

The "center" presumably is aware that Kerala's Communist-led United Front government decided to throw out the poultry volunteers without consulting with the civil servant most concerned with their work, M. N. Menon, State Director of Animal Husbandry, a man very much in favor of the Peace Corps staying on.

But the CIA taint has been bothering Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government in New Delhi as well. Foreign Minister M. C. Chagla indicated his misgivings to this reporter a while back in citing the "billions of dollars" CIA has at its disposal.